The firing from Pakistan side on 27th March, 2002 which was not in excess of normal trend, was effectively retaliated by the Indian troops, without suffering any casualty or damage.

Defence deals with Russia

5129. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Defence Minister visited Russia during the month of April, 2002 and had long discussions with the Russian authorities over defence deals;

(b) if so, whether the agreements on all the defence deals with Russia have been signed; and

(c) if so, to what extent Russia has agreed to assist India in defence projects?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Raksha Mantri paid an official visit to the Russian Federation from 10—13 April, 2002 at the invitation of Defence Minister of the Russian Federation and held discussions with the Russian side on defence Cooperation between the two countries. No agreement was signed during this visit.

Indo US joint Military Exercises

5130. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and United States have decided to hold joint military exercises in Alaska during the month of April-May, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the US Army whose winter warfare school is based in Alaska is keen to share with the Indian Army its special expertise in battling in icy conditions;

(c) whether any agreement in this regard was reached between the two countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) During the Indo-US Executive Steering Group Meeting in February 2002, exercises on reciprocal basis have been planned. This covers air borne exercise both in India and in the USA. The modalities of the exercise are yet to be finalized.

Purchase of Russian Factory to make spares for MiG-21

5131. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Ryssia has offered to sell to India a factory and all the machinery to make spare parts of MiG-21 fighter aircraft;

(b) if so, whether experts of India and Russia have discussed this issue;

(c) whether the Union Government are taking into consideration the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee in which they had suggested to phase out the MiG-21 which were of inferior quality; and

(d) if so, to what extent this will be helpful in continuance of MiG-21?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Ministry of Defence has not received any such proposal from Russia.

(c) and (d) MiG-21 Aircraft are airworthy and planned to be exploited till completion of their total technical life. MiG-21 Bis aircraft are being upgraded at Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. in phases. The upgraded MiG-21 Bis aircraft are expected to remain in service till at least 2015.